

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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REP. MARKEY: DETAINEES SHOULD BE 'QUESTIONED HERE NOT BOILED THERE'

*Whitehouse Spokesman defends sending prisoners to Uzbekistan
when reporters turn up the heat on the U.S. practice of 'outsourcing
torture'*

Washington DC: Today the White House press spokesman Scott McClellan defended the President's secret executive "extraordinary rendition" order, which has allowed the outsourcing of torture. When questioned by a reporter on why the White House needed to send people to a country like Uzbekistan, White House spokesman Scott McCellan defended the practice by saying 'it is important that we gather intelligence to protect the American people.'

Representative Markey, author of H.R. 952 the Torture Outsourcing Prevention Act, responded to the White House defense of "outsourcing torture" to other countries stating, "I agree that it's important to gather intelligence to protect the public, but I question whether sending detainees to Uzbekistan is essential to this goal. If we think a detainee is a terrorist that needs to be interrogated, they should be questioned here not boiled there in Uzbekistan."

What do we know about Uzbekistan? We know from the State Department's annual Human Rights report released just last week that, 'The Government's human rights record remained very poor; although there were some improvements, it continued to commit numerous serious abuses.' The State Department report notes that, the Uzbeki 'police and the NSS [National Security Service] routinely tortured, beat, and otherwise mistreated detainees to obtain confessions or incriminating information. Police, prison officials, and the NSS allegedly used suffocation, electric shock, rape, and other sexual abuse; however, beating was the most commonly reported method of torture.' The State Department report also describes a 2002 incident in which two captives were tortured to death by Uzbek prison authorities, reporting that 'independent analysis by experts in the United Kingdom of photographs taken shortly after their deaths concluded that the men had likely been suspended in boiling water.'

Markey, "I don't think that America should trust diplomatic assurances from a country like Uzbekistan, which engages in these kinds of horrific practices, and I think the President should revoke his rendition executive order immediately."

Representative Markey's bill is supported by forty-one representatives and World Organization For Human Rights USA, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First and the Association of the Bar of New York City.

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